



Chapter 3

New Construction and Additions

Non-Residential Guidelines



3.1 New Construction

The face of downtown Salisbury has constantly been in a state of change. While most of this change has been due to the alterations or restoration of historic structures, there have also been a number of new construction projects. Salisbury has been fortunate to see excellent examples of infill development such as Elizabeth Court in the 100 block of South Main and the Gateway Building in the 200 block of East Innes Street. Both of these buildings have contemporary designs that are entirely compatible within the historic fabric of downtown.



Elizabeth Court



Gateway Building

On the other hand, some new structures in downtown Salisbury have left a great deal to be desired in terms of compatibility with adjacent historic structures and the district in general.

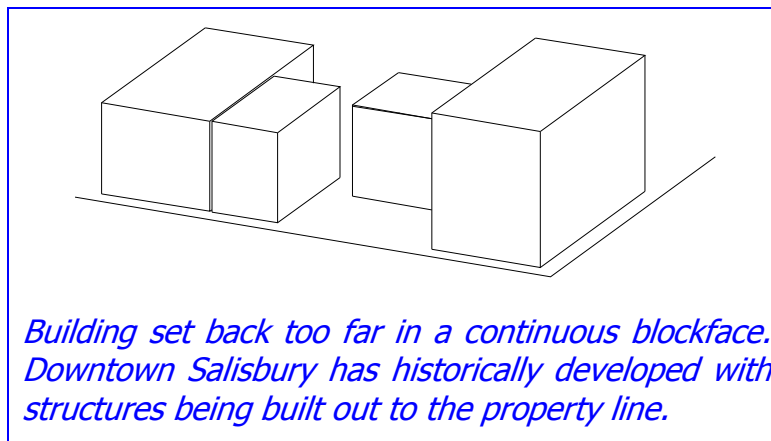
There remain a number of potential infill sites in downtown. The development of these sites is encouraged if the design of the new structure and site is compatible with the surrounding buildings and the overall character of the historic district. When siting new construction, compatibility with existing setbacks, the spacing of buildings, and the orientation of buildings should be considered. Compatibility of proposed landscaping, lighting, paving, signage, and accessory buildings is also important.

Guidelines for new construction are to ensure that the district's architectural and material vocabulary is respected. The height, the proportion, the roof shape, the materials, the texture, the scale, the details, and the color of the proposed building must be compatible with existing historic buildings in the district. However, compatible contemporary designs rather than historic duplications are encouraged.

New Construction Guidelines

Building Setbacks & Orientation on lot

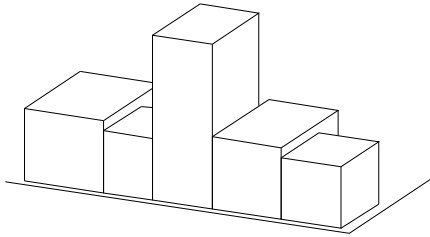
Perhaps one of the most important considerations of a new design is that it continue the building line of the existing streetscape by using similar setbacks as adjacent structures. Most of downtown Salisbury is zoned with a zero-setback line. Therefore, structures can not only be built directly to the right-of-way, but also can abut adjacent structures. The accommodation of an automobile dependent society has resulted in downtown commercial development that is oriented to the car and not the pedestrian. This type of development with buildings setback far from the road and paved parking areas in front of the structure is entirely incompatible in a historic downtown.



1. Keep the setback of the proposed building consistent with the setback of adjacent district buildings or nearby district buildings fronting on the same street. Buildings should be built close to the property line to continue the overall building line of the streetscape.
2. Make the distance between the proposed building and adjacent buildings compatible with the spacing between existing district buildings. Most buildings in downtown share interior walls.
3. In downtown, buildings should be oriented toward the street with the main pedestrian access in the front.
4. If parking is to be included in the design of a new construction project, it should be located in the rear of the building or in an interior portion of the block. Access to parking can be from alleyways, side streets, or other parking areas. If possible, allow for pedestrian access from the parking areas at the rear of the building.
5. If parking abuts a street, it should be screened from view by landscaping and/ or a low brick wall.

Size and Scale

A new building in the downtown should respect the size and scale of existing historic structures. Most buildings in downtown Salisbury are three or four stories, but there are some that are smaller and only a few that are significantly larger – such as the Plaza building on the Square.



Inappropriate scale

Most of downtown has a continuous block face with buildings of similar size and proportions relative to adjacent structures. However, there also exist buildings on the fringes of the district that are of a much larger scale but are separated from other structures by an appropriate distance which essentially minimizes the impact of the change in scale. This is usually the case with civic or religious buildings. For instance, the Old Post Office (currently the County administration building) is built to a much larger scale than other buildings in the block, but is separated from adjacent structures by an alleyway and a small park.

6. Design the height of the proposed building to be compatible with the height of historic buildings on the block or the street. There is a variety of heights of downtown buildings, so flexibility in height is appropriate as long as the overall scale of the new building and adjacent buildings are compatible.
7. Buildings on the interior of a continuous blockface should be no more than one story taller than the adjacent structures. Buildings on corners can be larger in scale than adjacent structures.



Corner building - larger scale than interior block

8. A building's overall proportion (ratio of height to width) should be consistent with existing historic structures.
9. Variations in the scale of buildings may be appropriate only on larger lots on the fringes of the district. Buildings of different scale should be separated by an appropriate distance as to minimize the relative impact.



Change in scale softened by building setback and landscaped separation.

10. Buildings of larger scale should provide for various landscaping and pedestrian amenities. Pedestrian access should be provided in and through the site.

Materials, Design Elements, and Rhythm

Design elements of the building itself should also be a consideration in the appropriateness of new construction in the historic district. Materials, architectural features, and the scale and rhythm of façade elements should be similar to that of existing historic structures.

Contemporary compatible designs are encouraged instead of historic copies or reproductions.

11. Use materials that are similar to those commonly found in the district such as brick, stone, and metal.
12. Contemporary substitute materials that closely imitate historic materials may be used on a limited basis, but should not make up the majority of the finish materials on a project. In order to qualify for use in new construction, substitute materials must have a demonstrated record of overall quality and durability. The physical properties of substitute materials must be similar to those of the historic materials they mimic. When considering substitute materials, the closer an element is to the viewer, the more closely the material and craftsmanship should match the original. The appropriateness of substitute materials shall be reviewed on an individual basis.
13. Architectural details such as windows, arches, and cornices should complement that of existing historic structures.
14. Aluminum cladding, vinyl and plastic siding and details are not appropriate.
15. The size and rhythm of a building's fenestration (doors and windows) should be compatible with existing structures in the district.
16. New windows and doors should be compatible in proportion, shape, position, location, pattern, and size with windows and doors of contributing structures in the district.
17. Contemporary construction that does not directly copy from historic buildings in the district but is compatible with them in height, proportion, roof shape, material, texture, scale, detail, and color, is strongly encouraged.

3.2 Additions

The introduction of additions compatible with historic buildings in the district is acceptable if the addition does not visually overpower the original building, compromise its historic character, or destroy any significant features and materials. By placing additions on inconspicuous elevations and limiting their size and height, the integrity of the original buildings can be maintained. It is important to differentiate the addition from the original building so that the original form is not lost. Additions should be designed so that they can be removed in the future without significant damage to the historic building or loss of historic materials. Also, as with any new construction project, the addition's impact on the site in terms of loss of important landscape features must be considered.

The compatibility of proposed additions with historic buildings will be reviewed in terms of the mass, the scale, the materials, the color, the roof form, and the proportion and the spacing of windows and doors. Additions that echo the style of the original structure and additions that introduce compatible contemporary design are both acceptable.

Additions Guidelines

1. Locate additions as inconspicuously as possible, on the rear or least character-defining elevation of historic buildings.
2. Construct additions so that there is the least possible loss of historic fabric. Also, ensure that character-defining features of the historic building are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.
3. Limit the size and the scale of additions so that they do not visually overpower historic buildings.
4. Design additions so that they are differentiated from the historic building. It is not appropriate to duplicate the form, the material, the style, and the detail of the historic building so closely that the integrity of the original building is lost or compromised.
5. Design additions so that they are compatible with the historic building in mass, materials, color, and proportion and spacing of windows and doors. Either reference design motifs from the historic building, or introduce a contemporary design that is compatible with the historic building.
6. Contemporary substitute materials that closely imitate historic materials may be used on a limited basis, but should not make up the majority of the finish materials on a project. In order to qualify for use in new construction, substitute materials must have a demonstrated record of overall quality and durability. The physical properties of substitute materials must be similar to

those of the historic materials they mimic. When considering substitute materials, the closer an element is to the viewer, the more closely the material and craftsmanship should match the original. Careful consideration should be given to the placement of substitute materials in relation to historic materials on the original structure to ensure that the transition is differentiated but not distracting or otherwise visually unattractive. Substitute materials should not result in unnecessary damage to adjacent historic materials during installation or over time. The appropriateness of substitute materials shall be reviewed on an individual basis.

7. Design additions so that they can be removed in the future without damaging the historic building.
8. It is not appropriate to construct an addition that is taller than the original building.

3.3 Rear Decks, Terraces, & Rooftop Decks

With large multifamily residential structures such as the Plaza and the Yadkin House along with upper-floor residential in commercial buildings, Salisbury has historically seen a healthy amount of downtown living. Also, with recent renovations of structures such as the Cheerwine building and various apartments above commercial, downtown residential population has continued to rise.

In an urban environment such as downtown Salisbury, especially with the amount of residential, property owners may wish to construct rear/rooftop decks and terraces. This type of residential amenity is certainly encouraged and is an important element to the success of the downtown community and livability. Decks and terraces are appropriate provided that they do not damage or alter any historic architectural features of the existing building.

Decks and Terraces Guidelines

1. Locate decks and terraces as inconspicuously as possible, on the rear or least character-defining elevation of historic buildings.
2. Construct decks and terraces so that there is the least possible loss of historic fabric. Also, ensure that character-defining features of the historic building are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.
3. Screen decks and terraces from public view with appropriate landscaping.
4. If a new deck is to be constructed, its design should be compatible in materials and detail with the main building.
5. When adding a rear deck to a historic structure, it should be designed so that it could be removed in the future without any loss to the historic fabric of the existing building.